

to trouble you about my money. That is safe, I know. It is as safe as my faith in you."

"Her faith in him!" And Clancy had telegraphed that the state inspector in the west was to visit the mine the day before this and that his discovery of the fraud would be followed by a visit from the federal authorities. Of a sudden a panic seized him. He wanted to get away before the authorities came down on him.

"I was shopping," continued the girl, "and mother asked me to get you to come to dinner tonight. So I just looked in."

"Yes, I'll come," muttered Corrigan, conscious that he was speaking abruptly and seeing the surprised look on her face. "Excuse me—I'm very busy—"

The girl made a haughty little bow. "If you are busy, Mr. Corrigan, of course I won't detain you any longer," she said, moving toward the door.

Jim Corrigan forgot everything. "Forgive me," he pleaded, catching her hands in his. "I didn't mean that, Delia. I was troubled—I was not able to say that—"

Her face softened. "Business troubles?" she queried, pondering. "I am so sorry I misunderstood. It was very thoughtless of me—"

"No, it was—about you," Jim blurted out. And something stronger than himself took possession of him. He wanted to tell her everything, including his love, to ask for forgiveness and to restore what he was able. The girl, seeing his emotion, waited until he could control himself.

"Delia," he began, and a footstep sounded in the passage outside and the door was opened.

The federal officer read his recognition in Jim's startled look.

"You are Mr. Corrigan, I believe?" he asked, though the formality was unnecessary. "And this lady is—"

"One of my customers," said Jim, "and not connected with this office."

"I shall have to ask her to wait a while all the same," said the man. "Don't be scared, miss; there won't be anything done to you and you're to be pitied."

"What does all this mean?" exclaimed Delia, bewildered.

"It means that I am under suspicion for fraudulent practices," answered Jim bitterly. "The government doesn't believe there is any gold in the mine."

"But of course there is!" exclaimed the girl indignantly. "Officer, I am Miss Delia Herning. My father was president of the national bank here. I can vouch for Mr. Corrigan's honor."

The officer, without paying the slightest attention, began to rummage among the papers on Jim's desk. The stenographers and other girls in the large room adjoining, having gotten wind of what was happening, appeared at the door with frightened faces.

"Mr. Corrigan—Jim, dear, I believe in you to the last!" cried Delia, losing all self-control. She came up to him and slipped her hand into his and stood defiantly by him.

Jim smiled a little wistfully. At that moment this was the hardest thing that he had to bear, her trustfulness. If only he had gone before she came!

"What's this?" queried the officer, picking up the telegram.

Jim had forgotten Clancy's message. He groaned as the man deftly opened it. Clancy was always outspoken and he was no more careful in his dispatches. That meant the end of all, of Delia, of what shreds of honor he had hoped to retain after the investigation.

The officer read the telegram and laid it down. Jim picked it up and read: "Huge gold deposits discovered in Red Lion mine. State inspector notified. Is coming at once to re-examine. Clancy."

The federal officer scratched his head. "My orders are to seal—"